



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL CLOSE AT 12:01 A.M., LOCAL TIME, OCTOBER 10, 2005

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the commercial fishery for shallow-water grouper (red, black, gag, yellowfin, scamp, yellowmouth, rock hind, and red hind) in Gulf of Mexico federal waters will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on October 10, 2005, when the red grouper quota of 5.31 million pounds, gutted weight, is projected to be reached. The existing regulations require closure of the entire shallow-water grouper fishery when either the red grouper quota or shallow-water grouper quota is reached. The commercial fishery will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2006. The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit having shallow-water grouper aboard must have landed and sold such shallow-water grouper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 10, 2005.

During the closure: (1) the sale or purchase of shallow-water grouper taken from the EEZ is prohibited; (2) when the recreational grouper fishery is open, the bag and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.39(b) apply to all harvest or possession of red grouper and shallow-water grouper in or from the Gulf of Mexico EEZ; and (3) when the recreational grouper fishery is closed, all harvest or possession of grouper in or from

the Gulf EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of red grouper or shallow-water grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 10, 2005, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to customers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing stewardship to our nation's coastal and marine resources. This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

NMFS is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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